CAPTAIN GEORGE'S

Penny Dreadful

TORONTO, JUNE 5, 1981 NUMBER 641

HOWARD HAWK'S GREATEST PRODUCTION
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LAW OF THE BARBARY COAST
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THE FIRST MOTION PICTURE OF ITS KIND!
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"IT'S TERRIFIC!"
PLUS RUSTY LEADS THE WAY
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SECOND FEATURE
LEO GORCEY and THE BOWERY BOYS
in Angels in Disguise
DOWNTOWN
SMOKING IN THE LOGES
YONGE AT DUNDAS PL. 3100
DAILY 9.30 A.M.
FREE PARKING
GLENDALE SCARBORO STATE
DAILY FROM 6.30 p.m., SAT. and HOL. 1 p.m.
1949

A WEEKLY REVIEW

BILL BLACK

MONUMENT VALLEY MEMOIRS: As you may have gathered from Editor Harris' two-part report, The New Searchers, the Toronto Serial Society finally made it to John Ford Country, Monument Valley. No doubt, in subsequent issues of P-D, the other members of our company will be making their varied reports. This is mine. Being as I am a man of many words, and little sense, I shall try to cut down on the stargazing and allusions to the "magic" of it all, and keep the thing hard facts. It won't work, but I'll try it anyway. I'll confine my telling to the time spent at Gouldings, and that first initial trip into the valley.

Gouldings Lodge and Trading Post lies at the upper base of Rock Door Mesa, about six miles west of the valley proper, hard by "The Gap," and Oljeto Mesa, some twenty-odd miles north of Kayenta. There's a hospital there now, and a few stores and houses, but we decided, from careful consideration of the rock formation, that "The Gap" is the site of "Thursday's Charge" in Fort Apache. Try as we might, we failed to find the slight depression and ring of stones from which the troops conduct their final stand, but there is a fairly new building in what looks to be that spot. Progress has never been a bargain.

The Lodge itself, which is up and around the side of the mesa from "The Gap," facing due north, is relatively unchanged. The buildings, while a different color, and faced with brick now, are essentially the same. The dining hall, much evident in She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, seems to have a different front area, as though a rock garden had been designed there, but it too primarily looks the same. The main office building, seen in She Wore a Yellow Ribbon as part of Fort Stark, and the way station in the first reel of Fort Apache, doesn't seem to have changed at all. The motel block, which is not seen in any of Ford's films, nevertheless holds interest. There are nineteen rooms there; the final three, being 17, 18 and 19, were at various times over the years occupied by Mr. Bond in 17, Mr. Wayne in 18 and, of course, Mr. Ford in 19, this information coming to us from a long-time resident and employee of the lodge.

The T. S. S. mentor, Mr. Daynard, and Editor Harris resided in number 19; Mr. Seeley, the Financial Wizard and official T. S. S. photographer, and this reporter inhabited Mr. Wayne's number 18, and in number 17 our own resident cinematographer, Mr. Hutchison, and the pudgy, one-eyed Mexican-Rochesterian, Mr. Parkhurst, slumbered mightily.

These rooms have not changed substantially since at least 1955, according to a photograph in the May, 1956, issue of Arizona magazine, and the temptation to strip the paneling from the walls in search of artifacts loomed

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large. In fact, in number 18, sheets of yellowed parchment were discovered behind the wall mirror, and upon examination were found to be Martin Pauley's letter to Miss Laurie in The Searchers, but this was later declared a "plant" by a chuckling, albeit initially surprised Editor Harris. This ruse was greatly aided by the convincing acting job carried off by the room's occupants, Messrs. Seeley and Black. These very sheets turned up in a somewhat suspicious manner at the remains of the walls and gateway of Fort Stark, from She Wore a Yellow Ribbon; interesting, considering that She Wore a Yellow Ribbon was completed some six years prior to The Searchers. Nonetheless, the clever forgeries were the cause of much hilarity.

The rooms feature large picture windows, and with each passing cloud, the view afforded is a magnificent one. Due north of the Lodge is a wide open stretch of sand and scrub, revealing at some distance, from left to right, Eagle Rock, the Setting Hen, Brigham's Tomb, The Throne, The Stagecoach, the Bear and the Rabbit, and, finally, Castle Butte, all of which are at the northwestern extremity of the valley. Late afternoon and sunset, viewed from the terrace at Gouldings, is a sight to remember. At one juncture, in the quiet of the dusk, I discovered Editor Harris seated alone at the door of number 19. He was, he confided, staring out over the landscape and "listening to the wind." Turning away, I left him to his musings. Each of us, in his own way, felt the majesty of the land.

There is, I'm told, a slide show each evening in the dining hall. I avoided this religiously, choosing instead at that hour of dusk, to accompany Mr. Seeley on a photographic trek to the Navajo Visitors Centre, from where, halfway up Mitchell Mesa, it is possible to view purple evening creep from the east, and see the last blazing rays of the setting sun light up the Mittens and Merrick Butte. Whether by design or accident, we separated. As Martha recommended the evening of Scar's attack, "Let's just enjoy the dusk."

TO BE CONTINUED

FILM REVIVALS: The Toronto Film Society, now in its 34th season, has come up with an interesting idea for its summer series, which will be held at the Crest Theatre, 551 Mt. Pleasant, beginning July 13. Entitled Revisions: Let's Do It Again, the Monday night series offers double bills of films and their remakes or later reworkings. The first double is The Philadelphia Story (1940) and High Society (1956). July 20, it's Sunset Boulevard (1950) and Fedora (1979); July 27, The Informer (1929) and The Informer (1935); Aug. 10, The Magnificent Seven (1960) with Steve McQueen et al, and Battle Beyond the Stars (1980); Aug. 17, The Guardsman (1931) and The Chocolate Soldier (1941); Aug. 24, These Three (1936) and The Children's Hour (1961); Aug. 31, Ninotchka (1939) and Silk Stockings (1957). For info, phone 489-7234 (days) or 923-6988 (evenings and weekends). Admission by series membership only.

PETE HARRIS

RIDIN' THE RANGE II: The Rough Riders series ended with West of the Law, released Oct. 2, 1942. The screen partnership of Buck Jones, Tim McCoy and Raymond Hatton was dissolved when Col. Tim answered the call the arms and returned to the army for special wartime duty. Buck had one more performance to give as Buck Roberts, the character he had played in the Rough Riders series, appearing in Dawn On The Great Divide, with Hatton reprising his role of Sandy Hopkins. The film had the same producer (Scott Dunlap) and writer (Jess Bowers) as all eight Rough Riders entries, and the director (Howard Bretherton) of the last five. Also in the cast were Mona Barrie, Robert Lowery, Rex Bell, Harry Woods, Tris Coffin, Dennis Moore and Roy Barcroft.

The movie was to be the first in a new series, but it turned out to be Buck's last screen appearance. Before Dawn On The Great Divide was released, a bond-selling tour took Buck and producer Dunlap to Boston where a party was held Nov. 28, 1942, in the western star's honor at a nightclub called the Coconut Grove. During the festivities, however, a fire suddenly erupted and swept through the club. When it was over, the death toll stood at 478 -- including Buck Jones, who died of burns two days later.

There were conflicting accounts of how Buck got caught in the blaze, but according to the generally accepted version, he got out safely at first and then went back in to help other people escape. Buck Jones, the star of over a hundred westerns, had played out his last role -- that of real-life hero -- to the bitter end.

In his B-Western book, The Thrill of It All, Alan Barbour quotes Roy Barcroft as telling him that, at a screening of Dawn On The Great Divide after Buck's death, "there wasn't a dry eye in the house and especially mine."

Dawn On The Great Divide was released Dec. 18, 1942, less than three weeks after Buck Jones's death and little more than a year after Pearl Harbor had plunged the United States into the war. It was a time when many people were dying all over the world in many different and terrible ways, in places with strange and distant names like Stalingrad and Guadalcanal and Dieppe and El Alamein. But somehow the loss of Buck Jones must have seemed all the more terrible, for he represented that safe, secure and predictable land of the B-Western far removed from the real-life horrors of war, a land where the good guys always won. For real-life tragedy to invade that world seemed all the more ironic and cruel.

There's one consolation, though. A lot of Buck's movies are still with us, and even skimming through some of the titles gives us the essence of that mythical domain where movie cowboys forever ride: Men Without Law, The Dawn Trail, Ridin' For Justice, South of the Rio Grande, The Sundown Rider, Fighting Code, The Roaring West, Border Brigands, Silver Spurs, Smoketree Range and Empty Saddles.